

January 14, 1975

MEMO

To: Dr. A. D. Martinson
From: Richard D. Osness
Subject: Parkland Historical Project: Interview with Anders and Emma Ramstad.

This is my initial interview with Anders William Ramstad and Emma Knindlog Ramstad, of # 305, University House, Parkland, Washington, 537-8826. The interview was conducted on October 9, 1974, and the discussion ranged from Mrs. Ramstad's interest in the history of the Parkland area to the couple's years of activity in the area and their association with Pacific Lutheran University.

In the main, the interview was concerned with Mrs. Ramstad's work with the Suburban Study Club, now in its forty-sixth year, and her association with various pioneer families of Parkland. A list of these people is noted below:

Mrs. Malla Dahl (H.L.J.), 514 So. 123rd, Parkland, 537-5120.
Mrs. Louise Sales, 420 So. 123rd, Parkland, 531-0703.
Mr. William Storaasli, Parkland - Mrs. Storaasli is a sister of Mrs. Dahl.
Mr. William Gregory, Parkland.
Mrs. Carl T. Lindgren, Parkland, 537-4083.
Mrs. Walter (Isabell) Daniels, and Mrs. Sonva Egtvedt, Parkland, # 213 and # 204 University House. Storaasli sisters.
Mrs. Howard Doering, 523 So. 118th, Parkland, 531-0317.
Mrs. O. J. (Agnes) Stuen, and Mrs. Esther Davis, sisters, 617 So. 120th, Parkland, 537-7135.
Mr. Oliver Harstad, 4316 So. Bell, Tacoma, 472-5457.
Oscar Anderson, Eatonville.
Mrs. T. H. (Smith) Algeo, 4107 110th St. S. W., Lakewood, 588-3235.

Mrs. Dahl used to operate a store on Garfield Street. Her father (Sinland) was a carpenter on the first building for PLU. (No one is to contact Mrs. Dahl except me, per her request.) Mrs. Algeo is a granddaughter of Peter Smith, an early pioneer, who, with William Wilson, obtained land grants in the area prior to 1900. A grandson of Smith was a dentist in South Tacoma. The old Smith home is near Washington High School. Mrs. Ramstad stated that Mrs. Algeo has a speech difficulty and helped obtain scrap books which Mrs. Algeo had compiled. These books have been reviewed and returned.

Mr. Harstad is a son of Bjug Harstad, founder of PLU, and has been working on a history of the area. Mrs. Lindgren is a daughter of the Glasso family who lived on Garfield Street prior to 1900. Her files are with the Parkland library; see Pat Tyler at the Library. (Per my conversation with Mrs. Lindgren on October 10, 1974.) Mr. Lindgren

is a realtor in Parkland and has stated that Parkland extends from 96th Street to 144th Street and from Franklin Pierce to Interstate 5.

The Ramstad's agreed with Mr. Lindgren on Parkland's boundaries and interjected that Parkland is where Parkland Light and Water serve. The boundary is difficult to ascertain because the area is not incorporated. Parkland Light and Water is the oldest co-op of its kind in the United States.

The Ramstad's have agreed to a taped interview and would be especially good for the educational history of the area, and for general history after 1925. They came here in 1925 from Seattle, where Mr. Ramstad had a parish. He taught chemistry, math, physical geography at PLU, and also coached. Both have been active in the community. Some data was received from Mrs. Ramstad which I have already turned over to you for inclusion in the Nisqually Plains Room. Some additional notes are attached.

Miscellaneous notes received during the discussion are as follows:

The old Art Building at PLU used to house the Parkland paper, the Prairie Pointer. It was published in the basement of this building.

The Lutheran school was set up as Luther had said - from primary through college. Norwegian influence and the Norwegian Synod - United Norwegian.

Great importance of Parkland Light and Water and PLU to the meaning of an identity/community for Parkland. Both stated that PLU and PLW would be important in the history and should be mentioned early in the publication.

Land used to be forested. Garfield Street seems to be the main street. According to Mr. Ramstad, the area has always been called Parkland, never anything else.

Other notes were received from Mrs. Ramstad on later dates. These include:

Frank Kruekeberg, 11716 So. C., 537-5636, has map of the area. This was copied and I have the picture which will be turned over to the Nisqually Plains Room. Frank also said he had had some pictures, but they were turned over to a Vance at PLU.

Mrs. Ramstad contacted a Mrs. Richards who was able to get Mrs. Algeo's scrap books for our perusal.

Mr. Ramstad will translate documents if necessary.

Mrs. Ramstad said to contact James Scafturon, 117 120th St. 537-7364, for possible information, and Otto Damkier, 505 123rd St., 537-8757. She is also contacting Rev. Hjalmar Storaasli in the University House for a taping session with the Storaasli family.

Additional information will be supplied later per the taped interview mentioned above.

Very truly yours
Richard D. Osness

RICHARD D. OSNESS

Brief history of Parkland

Notes received
from Mrs. Emma
Lunstad
10-9-74

1. Two huge excavations (girls' dorm. & library)

a/ Why spend so much time underground?

Why not get going with something above the ground - something that we can see?

Take a good look as you go by the PLU library construction site, and see what intricate plans and what tremendous work have gone into the construction of that building foundation to assure a safe, multipurpose and long-lasting superstructure. Many of you may be college students in the future studying in that library, and you can then recall that you saw that marvelous foundation being laid, and the building will mean so much more to you!

When we know something about the past, the present takes on a new and greater interest!

So, let's discover, together, a few things about Parkland that will make it a more interesting place to call "home".

2. We have to go quite far back in years, but it is not long in the history of a community. Have you studied about the settlement of this western area?

In the early 1800's, England, France and Russia were exploring the west coast, and at one time our government, seeing only a broad wilderness barrier and (to them) an impassable mountain range, were almost ready to let anyone in there brave enough to venture settlement on the other side (to them) of the mountains.

Fortunately, our country also had some brave and venturesome explorers and pioneers who moved west, conquered the wilderness, crossed the mountains, and found a lush and fruitful territory.

So the land was surveyed (somewhat broadly speaking) and this northwest area became Oregon Territory - north of what is now California, east to the Rockies, and England's boundary was set at Vancouver Island.

3. To encourage immigrants to this vast Oregon Territory, the U. S. Congress passed an act called "The Donation Act", known to the settlers as the "Oregon Land Law". This became effective Sept. 27, 1850. How many years ago? (116)

It provided that any citizen above the age of 21 could go to the Oregon Territory and file on a half section of land. How many acres in a section? 640. A married man could locate on a whole section. If at the end of 5 years they had made certain improvements, they would receive a deed to the land. The movement was slow - it took real courage and money and possessions (household goods)(wagons and oxen, and some milk cows). The first year only 58 claims were taken. (During the time the act was in operation 985 claims were taken). This is the law under which the early donation claims in Pierce County were taken.

4. Among the first families taking donation claims in the Parkland area and of most interest to us were probably the Peter Smiths, The William Wilsons and the Tollentires, because from them the Pacific Lutheran University cooperation bought land for the college. The Tollentire claim extended north to what is now 121st St. (where the Petersons and we live), and the Wilson-Smith settlers sold part of their land for our lower campus. Other families were the Mahons (Brookdale Golf Course

area, and the Crofts - east of PLU. It is too bad that none of these names were preserved in the naming of streets, buildings or parks.

A newly arrived real estate man, upon hearing that a college was to be built out in this area, made a drawing of what Parkland should look like when it was platted into building lots. (1)

We see Tacoma and Puget Sound in the distance and a proposed drawing of what the college should look like.

The first time the name "Parkland" appeared, was on a deed that William Wilson and his wife received upon filing ~~xup~~ their claim in April of 1890. It is thought that a name for the community was needed and perhaps Mr. Wilson so appreciated the park-like land that he called it "Parkland".

Up here in what we call Parkland now, it is thought that the first house was the Glasso house, next to the Lindgren real estate office. Mr. Glasso (Mrs. Lindgren's father) was a stone mason employed in the building of Harstad Hall, and Mrs. Glasso opened a boarding house to feed the men who worked on the building.

5. Do you know why this site was chosen for PLU? An ample supply of water in Clover Creek! It used to be a broad deep mountain stream, adequate to supply a large area with fine clean water. Even when we came here in 1925, it was an adequate swimming place for the neighborhood children.
6. Mary Wilson married William Smith and they settled down ~~xxxxxx~~ near a little lake down toward Spanaway (nearer Parkland) and for many years were known for their delightful lily pond and beautiful flower gardens. They indeed made their home a park. I knew Mrs. Smith well, was in the same Study Club with her, and she often told of her early days, when she would ride horseback from their home into Fern Hill where she taught school. Just riding paths thru the woods most of the way.
7. The college attracted settlers and houses began to spring up in the community, but since there were no regular streets, there wasn't much rhyme nor reason for their locations. (2)
 - (3) In this picture we see a tree right in the middle of what is now Wheeler St. This shows a rear view of the college - note how small the trees were at that time.
 - (4) In this picture, the area in the foreground is where the Administration Building is now.
 - (5) This is another rear view of Harstad Hall, showing the first and the new gymnasium.
 - (6) Another front view of the building, about 1891-2, showing a wire fence all around the building area to keep out straying cattle, and a playground, where the parking lot now is.
 - (7) In this picture we see the baseball field for the college students - rightly called "Parkland Pebbles". In the distance more homes built near the college.
 - (8) This picture again emphasizes how small the trees were in those days.
8. Forty years ago when we came here, there was one public school - The Parkland Grade School, and 8 teachers. The postoffice, grocery and drygoods store were housed in what later was known as the Lehman Building on Garfield St. which was burned 3 or 4 years ago to make room for the ~~Evans Dental Clinic~~ ~~Trinity Church~~ ~~(now APSBldg.)~~ ~~next to Harstad Hall.~~

(9) There were not many faculty members at PLU at that time, and these are the faculty children. (taken over by the Xavier home)

(10) This picture shows the college campus before chapel and separate dormitory buildings were erected. Everything was housed in Harstad Hall - recreation was in the gym, chapel for students in the chapel at right. In Harstad Hall, classrooms, library, dining hall, offices and deans' living quarters were housed on the first two floors. Above that the building was walled off to house the girls on the north wing and the boys on the south.

A privately owned golf course occupied most of the lower campus.

(11) There was a delightful spring on the hillside below what is now the Malmin residence. You can see tables and benches where the faculty families used to picnic. Note the size of Clover Creek!

(12) Note the up-to-date cars, and the wire fence enclosing the campus, and a really distinguished professor - Dr. Hans Hoff. Also a little boy who had not much to do but swing on the gate and get ice cream cones from the students, but is today Pres. of Shoreline Community College. We lived in the building at that time. (Husband dean of men, full time teacher, athletic coach, buyer for the kitchen).

8. Transportation

In the early days the Parkland area was served by a little railroad train which was nicknamed "Betsy" and passed thru here on its way to Spanaway. (13) Here is the depot, located on the corner of Garfield and C Sts. The Train, sometimes one, and sometimes 2 cars, made four round trips daily. It carried passengers and baggage. It left the downtown depot (not the present one) went almost over in the South Tacoma area, and when it came to the present McChord Air Field site, it turned east on 116th St. to C, then south to Parkland Depot and Spanaway. Since it was run b. steam, and sparks would sometimes fly, furrows were plowed on both sides of the track to prevent fires in the long grass and low trees.

Later street car lines served Parkland and Spanaway, and they finally gave way to buses, and the tracks were torn up.

9. WHEN YOU WALK AROUND PARKLAND, look around you, and you can probably picture some of the rich history, early struggles, and fulfilled dreams of pioneer folks who were courageous enough to "dream some impossible and impractical dreams", which now give us this rich heritage. You will also find that the present buildings, streets and names, and even the house where you live will take on new meaning and interest.